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HISTORY OF THE WAR



THE QUEEN OF
THE BELGIANS.

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The Times War Atlas (still on sale, price 9d.) originally contained 24 Maps and plans of the various Seats of War and of the leading fortresses. As the campaign, both in the eastern and western theatres, developed, an enlargement of the original Atlas became necessary. Nineteen additional maps have therefore been embodied in a Supplement at a further cost of 6d.

The 43 Maps and Plans now comprised in The Times War Atlas and its Supplement constitute an indispensable guide to the news columns of the daily journals.

With their illuminating aid it is possible to follow intelligently the course of the War.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE STORY OF LIÈGE.

THE "BIRMINGHAM" OF BELGIUM—ITS STORMY HISTORY—PHYSICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL BEAUTIES—BELGIUM'S BAVARIAN QUEEN—GERMANY'S CHECKED PLAN—FIRST ATTACK ON LIÈGE—MISEMPLOYMENT OF MASSED INFANTRY—SKILFUL BELGIAN DEFENCE—THE DECISIVE BAYONET—THE ERROR OF GERMAN DISCIPLINE—STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS OF LIÈGE—FACTS ABOUT THE FORTS—SECRET GERMAN WORK IN LIÈGE—GENERAL LEMAN'S NARROW ESCAPE—MASSACRE OF LIÈGE CITIZENS—DISINGENUOUS STATEMENT FROM BERLIN—INTERNATIONAL LAW MISAPPLIED—DISHONESTY OF THE GERMAN CASE—PARALLEL OF THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS BURGLAR—GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY NEGLECTED BY THE GERMANS—EVIDENCE OF ATROCITIES AT LIÈGE—EXCUSE FOR BELGIUM—GENERAL VON EMMICH AND HIS TASK—VALUE OF INITIAL BELGIAN SUCCESSES—TERRIBLE SLAUGHTER OF GERMANS—THREE ARMY CORPS BROUGHT TO A STANDSTILL—INEXORABLE GERMAN ADVANCE—MORE BRILLIANT BELGIAN SUCCESSES—CROSS OF THE LEGION OF HONOUR FOR LIÈGE—RECORDS OF INDIVIDUAL GALLANTRY—NOTHING AVAILED AGAINST THE BIG GUNS—DIFFICULTY OF THEIR TRANSPORT—COLLAPSE OF THE FORTS—MESSRS. KRUPP'S TRIUMPH—SUMMARY OF THE SIEGE—PLAYING HIDE-AND-SEEK WITH SHELLS—DESTRUCTION OF BUILDINGS—OCCUPATION OF THE TOWN—UNIQUE POSITION THUS CREATED—ILL-FOUNDED REJOICINGS IN BERLIN AND MISTAKEN HOPES IN LONDON—IN SPITE OF CHECKS GERMAN ADVANCE IRRESISTIBLE—LIÈGE AND NAMUR COMPARED—THE VALUE OF RING FORTRESSES—GENERAL LEMAN "PLAYS THE GAME"—MORAL AND POLITICAL EFFECTS OF BELGIAN SUCCESS IN RESISTANCE—DESTRUCTION OF FORTS AND CAPTURE OF GENERAL LEMAN—PATHETIC AND GALLANT FINALE—TESTIMONY OF BRITISH STATESMEN.

THE usual description of Liège as the "Birmingham of Belgium" gave one no idea of the peaceful beauty of the town with its numerous spires and spacious streets, fringed with boulevards spreading outwards from the wide waters of the Meuse toward the undulating country with its many lovely woods, the haunts of butterflies and birds. Between these were situated the forts, like great iron ant-hills, each cupola crowning the smooth glacis on which on the night of August 5 the German dead lay in high ridges like the jet am of the tide upon a beach, each ridge indicating the high-water mark to which the futile rush of a wave of infantry had reached. But as the sun set peacefully on August 3 the forts were no more conspicuous than usual

amid their picturesque surroundings. They were always familiar features in a bird's-eye view of the environs of Liège, but they did not dominate the landscape; and there was little, even in the minds of the Liègeois as they listened to the music of St. Barthélemy's evening chimes, to suggest that the morrow would see that landscape ringed with steel or that for many days the incessant thunder of the guns would be speaking to the world of the heroism and the wreckage of Liège.

Indeed, on that close, hot evening at the beginning of August the wooded slopes beyond which the Germans were waiting for nightfall seemed to contain nothing more dangerous than the magpies that flickered black and white along the margins of the thickets; and the quiet fields



LIÈGE.

The above, with the illustration on the opposite page, forms a panoramic view of Liège as it was, and shows the entrance to the Railway Station.

around the farms showed no worse enemies than the family parties of crows prospecting for early walnuts—crows that would soon fatten on horses' entrails and pick the eyes of men.

No serious shadow of the coming evil had yet fallen across those fair hills. There had been rumours, of course, and of course the troops were ready in Liège; but the contented Walloon farmer paid little attention to rumours or the activities of the soldiers. He hoped the sultry sunset did not portend thunder—little dreaming of the thunder of the guns that would be in his ears for many nights and days. Perhaps he thought, as he looked over the rolling fields, ripe through abundant sunshine with early crops, that the harvest of 1914 would be one that the Liégeois would remember for many years. And so indeed it was; for it proved to be the crowning harvest of the city's stormy prominence in history, passing back for nearly 1,200 years.

Liège made her entry into the field of political history in the year 720, when, with the consent

of Pope Gregory the Second, the Bishop of Maestricht transferred the See from that sleepy city to its fast-growing rival at the junction of the Meuse and the Ourthe. In the following century the Bishops of Liège added to their honours the titles of Princes of the Empire and Dukes of Bouillon. Their residence in the city of Liège added of course vastly to its dignity and consequence, and their ecclesiastical and military subordinates swelled its population and fed its growing trade.

But there was another side to these benefits. The difference between the lay and ecclesiastical aristocracy of the Middle Ages was often merely skin-deep, a matter of title and costume rather than of nature or of habit of life; and the long list of the Prince-Bishops of Liège comprised few individuals who were not as insolent in their pretensions, as sudden and quick in quarrel, as vindictive in revenge, and as extortionate as their unsanctified brethren. The history of Liège is the story of a long struggle between the turbulent and liberty-



LIÈGE.

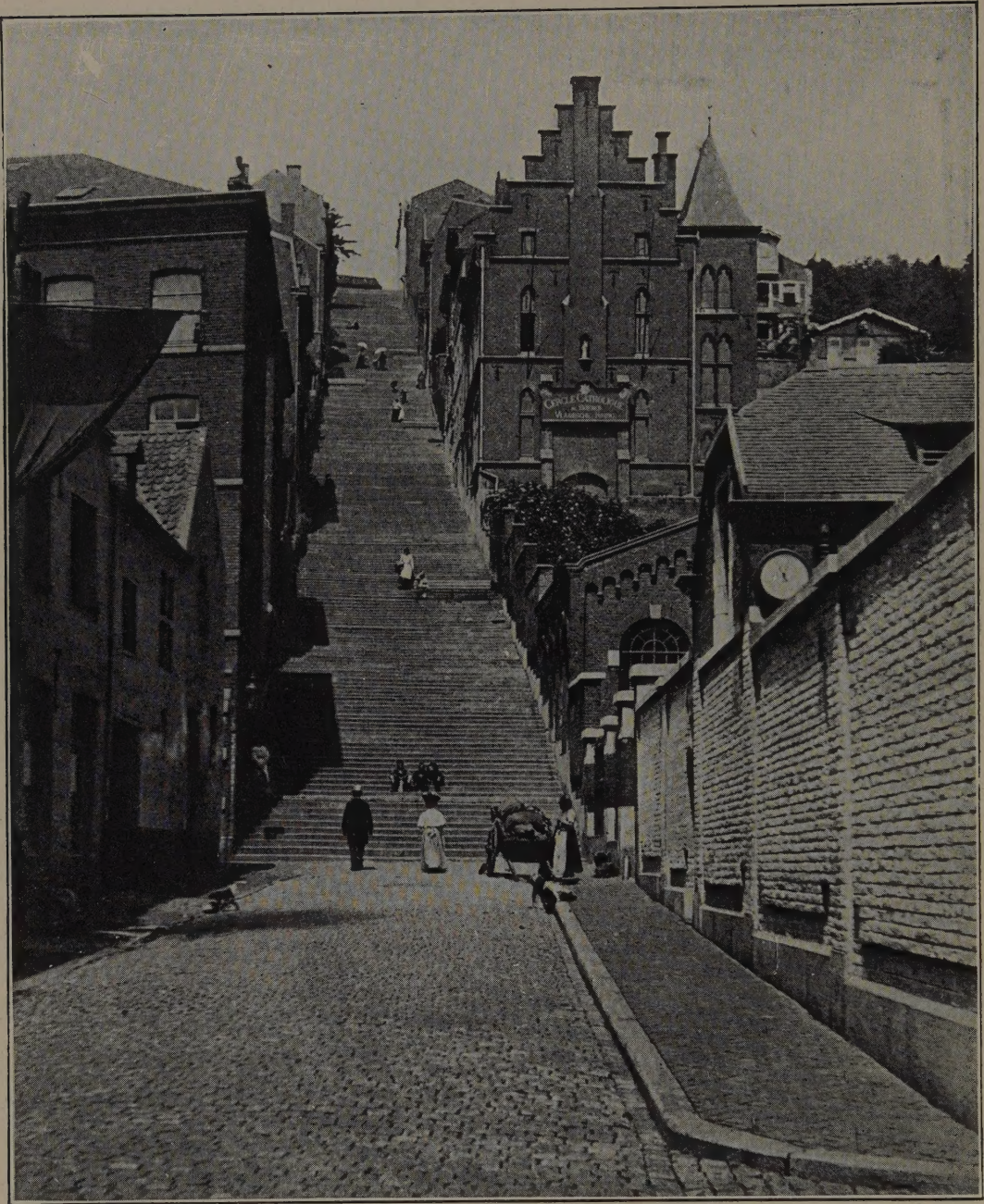
Centre of the town, and the river, with a view of the bridge that was destroyed.

loving citizens and their priestly oppressors, many of whom were only able to enter the city either at the head or in the rear of armies of mercenaries. Revolts were frequent and bloody, and sometimes more or less successful; but on the whole the Prince-Bishops of Liège held their own so well that the French historian, Jules Dalhaize, tells us that even in the eighteenth century they were still absolute rulers, and that Gérard de Hoensbroeck, who occupied the episcopal throne in 1789, "knew no other law than his own will."

The continuance and growth of the Prince-Bishops' power would indicate that most of them must have been men of considerable political talent, with a keen eye for the winning side, as, in the interminable quarrels between the Empire and the Papacy, they pursued no settled line of policy, but fought with or against the Holy See as their personal interest tended. One of them, Henry of Leyden, Prince-Bishop from 1145 to 1164, followed Frederick Barbarossa to Italy, helped in the downfall of

Pope Alexander III., supported the Anti-Pope Victor, and consecrated his successor, Paschal. In strange contrast with rebels of this type were Bishop Alexander, who, deposed in 1134 by Innocent the Second, died of shame; Albéron of Namur, whose heart broke at an angry summons to the presence of Eugenius the Third; and Raoul of Zeringhen, who, admonished for malpractice by the pontifical legate, laid aside his crozier and expiated his offences as a crusader. Best known of all to history is Louis de Bourbon, the victim of the ferocity of William de la Marek, "the Boar of the Ardennes." Far from an ideal priest, worldly, luxurious, and indolent, the courage and dignity with which he met his death would have earned pardon for much heavier offences.

Amid all these turmoils Liège had flourished and grown, and about the year 1400 the democratic element had held its own so well that it could be described as "a city of priests changed into one of colliers and armourers." "It was," we are told, "a city that gloried in its



STEPS LEADING UP TO THE FORTS, LIÈGE. [Underwood & Underwood.]

rupture with the past," but "the past" rose and reasserted itself in 1408, when the Prince-Bishop John of Bavaria, assisted by his cousin, John the Fearless, broke the forces of the citizens and excluded them ruthlessly from power. A generation later democracy triumphed again, again to be overthrown, this time by Charles the Bold of Burgundy, who, in 1467, defeated the Liégeois in the field, and reinstated the Bishop and his kinsman, the afore-mentioned Louis de Bourbon. In the following year the undismayed burghers rose

in fresh revolt, provoked thereto by the intrigues and promises of the crafty Louis XI. of France, Charles's seeming friend and deadliest enemy. It was probably the most triumphant hour of Charles's life, and the bitterest hour that Louis ever knew, when, in the enforced presence and with the extorted consent of the latter, Charles stormed Liège, put its inhabitants to indiscriminate slaughter, and, save for its pillaged churches, razed it to the ground. It was characteristic of Charles that he failed to complete the political annexation of the

principality he had so frightfully chastised. At his death, nine years later, in 1477, the unconquerable spirit of the Walloon population had already done much to restore the city to its former strength, and a single generation sufficed to erase the last vestiges of her ruin.

Liège passed practically unscathed through the long agony of the struggle of the Netherlands against Philip II. and the Duke of Alva, and underwent no such calamities as those which desolated the sister cities of Maestricht, Brussels, and Antwerp. She was stormed and occupied by the soldiers of Louis XIV. in 1691, and in 1702 was occupied by the English under Marlborough. Her occupation in 1792 by a French contingent commanded by La Fayette concluded the tale of her warlike experiences until the outbreak of the present struggle.

In its modern aspect Liège, as the centre of the coalmining industry of Eastern Belgium, has always exhibited to the traveller, even at a distance, the signs of its occupation in the pall of smoke overhead, to which the countless chimneys of the factories which the output of coal supports are constantly contributing. One of the mines is the deepest in the world, and many others, now abandoned, pass beneath the city and the river.

Among the chief industries for which Liège has long been, and will doubtless again be, famous through the world is the manufacture of arms and weapons of all kinds—congenial work, one might suppose, for the quick-witted Walloon people, who have always in their city's stormy history shown that they know how to use weapons as well as how to make them. Perhaps a little over-readiness in this direction on their part, forgetting that modern war is confined to combatants only, offers some explanation, but no excuse, for the savagery of the German "reprisals."

Besides the manufacture of arms, of which there were more than 180 factories, the Liège zinc foundries, engine factories, and cycle works were all world-famous, and the zinc works of Vieille Montagne were the largest in existence.

But though this vast industrial activity clouded the air above Liège with smoke, and though wherever one looked upon the encircling hills the chimneys and shafts of mines were to be seen, the town itself was pleasant and well laid out, and the surrounding landscape beautiful.

Many of the improvements in Liège dated from 1905, when an International Exhibition was held there; and in preparing the area for this the course of the river Ourthe, which here joins the Meuse, had been diverted from its



GENERAL LEMAN,
The Gallant Defender of Liège.

[Alfieri.]

old bed and converted into the Canal de Dérivation, the old river course being filled up and added, with the adjoining land, to the Exhibition grounds. A fine park was also laid out on the Plateau de Cointe, whence the best general view of Liège is obtained, and several new bridges and streets were made, including the handsome and spacious boulevards.

Another grand view was obtained from the Citadel, an ancient and disused fort close to the north side of the town, which was built on the site of still older fortifications by the Prince-Bishop Maximilian Henry of Bavaria after the famous siege of Liège in 1649. No doubt he thought that he was making the city impregnable for ever; but three centuries had not passed before the newer fortresses, whose construction relegated the Citadel to the level of an antique curiosity, had themselves fallen utterly before the power of modern guns. The position of the Citadel, however, still remains commanding, and the view therefrom includes the entire city, of which all the centre from north to south looks like a cluster of islands between the canals and winding rivers, as well as the thickly-wooded background of the Ardennes Mountains on the right, and on the left the hills near Maestricht in Holland and the broad plains of Limburg, whence the German armies crossed the frontier in three streams at the beginning of the great war.

Between this distant historic landscape and the near view of Liège, rising from her ashes, the valleys of the Meuse, the Ourthe, and the Vesdre diverge, thickly dotted with populous Walloon villages. This had been a favourite country for German tourists and a rich field for German commercial enterprise; but 1914 wrought a change.

On the other side of the city another disused fortification, Fort Chartreuse, gave an almost equally fine prospect from the opposite point of view; and although the old fort itself was blown up by the Belgians during the siege in order that it might not provide cover for the enemy, the hill remained a vantage point from which, as far as the eye can reach on either hand, evidence of German devastation could be seen.

Before the bombardment the general aspect of the city was that of a place of parks and pleasure gardens, fine churches and spacious buildings. Among the latter the University, by its prominence, became a magnet for the German shells, and though only founded in 1817 as the central seat of learning for the Walloon race, no priceless heritage of ancient days could have been more thoroughly smashed and pulverized.

The grand Palais de Justice also, with its picturesque courts and vaulted pillars, blending late Gothic and Renaissance styles—and its west wing used as the Government House, faced by pleasure grounds and fountains on a picturesque slope—was only a product of 16th to 19th century genius; and the Town Hall only dated from early in the 18th century, although it contained pictures and tapestries of great age and value.

But in the Church of St. Jacques, with its famous stained-glass windows, the western façade was nearly 700 years old, while parts of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, also containing beautiful stained glass and statues, dated back to 968, 1280, and 1528. The Church of St. Jean belonged to the 12th, 14th, and 18th centuries, that of St. Croix to the 10th, 12th, and 14th, St. Martin to the 16th, St. Antoine, with its wood carvings and frescoes, to the 13th, and St. Barthélemy to the 11th and 12th, with its two towers and well-known chimes and famous bronze font of 12th-century work. In addition there were the domed church of St. Andrew, used as the Exchange, and the baroque fountains in the Place du Marché. Thus, as a subject for German bombardment, it may be seen that Liège had many attractions, even if it did not come up to the standard of Louvain or Reims.

Such, then, was the ancient town which lay sleeping peacefully amid its ring of watchdog forts that nestled so comfortably between the wooded uplands on the night of August 3, 1914.

The stirring events of the following day, culminating in the tragedy of Visé, have already been narrated, showing that varied fortunes had so far attended Germany's first steps in the war. The successful seizure of Luxemburg and the quiet crossing of the Belgian frontier, with the occupation of Limburg, had promised well for her. At the moment, indeed, it looked as if the Kaiser's plans for an invasion of France would be smoothly carried out and his Majesty would be able to count Belgium among the dutiful children of his Empire. Perhaps he even found some hope in the fact that the Queen of the Belgians was a German Princess, born at Possenhofen, and before her marriage known as the Duchess Elisabeth of Bavaria. But Germany who treated the claims of national honour so lightly herself had yet to learn that others placed them above ties of family and even above considerations of self-interest!

Instead of an obedient vassal the Kaiser found in Belgium a most resolute antagonist; and, when the storm broke, General von Emmich's three Army Corps, travelling lightly-equipped for speed, discovered that it was not so much an attack upon France through Belgium as a serious invasion of Belgium itself which lay before them, while the taking of even the little town of Visé had caused so much bloodshed and provoked such bitter enmity as augured ill for future progress.

The bombardment of Liège commenced in the early morning—a dull and hot morning—of August 5, the advance of the artillery having been covered—as is always the case in a German movement—by masses of cavalry, and it was continued without cessation until the 8th. The Germans attacked along a very wide front, stretching north to the smoking ruins of Visé close to the Dutch frontier, and on the south a considerable distance below Liège; but the artillery employed was not heavy enough. The big siege guns had not arrived and the forts had the best of the preliminary duel.

Then the amazing thing happened. It was as though the German generals, knowing nothing of war, had just read in some book how Napoleon won victories by the sudden, unexpected use of solid masses of men and had said to themselves, "Good! No one will expect the sudden application of masses of men in a case like this: so we will apply them." The result almost moved even the busy Belgians in the trenches



THE QUEEN OF THE BELGIANS.



WHERE THE GERMANS ARE SAID TO HAVE FIRST CROSSED THE MEUSE.

to pity. "It was death in haystacks," said one of them afterwards, trying to describe the effect of the combined field-gun, machine-gun, and rifle fire upon the masses of men. Another eye-witness stated that the average height of the ridges of German dead was $1\frac{1}{2}$ yards. Many corpses are required to reach that level. It was the visible result of a form of military enterprise which a civilian who had dined too well might conceive.

As the day wore on the battle became more fierce, for the simple reason that the successive waves of Germans jammed each other on, until before one of the forts a great host of men succeeded in gaining a footing on the near slopes, where the great guns could not be depressed to reach them. For a brief space they seemed to think that they were on the threshold of victory and rushed forward, only to discover—what, surely, their officers should have known all along—that the machine guns were waiting for them. Further back their comrades had been killed: here they were massacred.

In contrast with this useless waste of German life, the Belgian troops in the trenches appear to have been kept admirably in hand. Some of the subsiding ripples of the tide of German assault were only definitely suppressed by rifle fire at 50 yards; and often the ideal distance for a bayonet charge, when you can see the whites of your enemies' eyes, seemed almost reached. Now and again it actually was reached; and

then the staggering German ranks appeared to have no stomach for cold steel. Many turned and ran; many held up their hands and surrendered; the rest were killed.

It was rather surprising that men who had gone through so much should have been cowed at the last by the bayonet. Considered in cold blood, as a feat performed by intelligent men, it should seem a much more terrible test of courage to march, as on parade, in solid ranks into the hell of an entrenched enemy's combined and concentrated fire of big guns, machine guns, and rifles than to meet a bayonet charge in which such solidity as the ranks retained would have been all on the side of the Germans. Yet it was not only at Liège, but also on many fields of subsequent battle, that the Belgian and allied troops discovered to their surprise and almost to their disappointment that the German infantry would not wait for the application of steel. Scores of instances could be quoted in which British soldiers, after expressing their personal contempt for the German rifle-fire—"they can't shoot for nuts" was a favourite comment—still expressed their great admiration for the way in which those ranks of men came stumbling over the corpses of their slaughtered comrades to be slaughtered in their turn. And then always came the final criticism—"but they won't wait for the bayonet." This seeming anomaly is explained by one word used above, in considering

whether the courageous advance of the German soldiers to almost certain death was "a feat performed by *intelligent men*." That is just what it was not. The German system of discipline took a human being and converted him, in spite of whatever individual intelligence he might possess, into a military machine which could exhibit no individual intelligence whatever. The British system, and the French and Belgian also, set a higher value upon the men, seeking to convert each human being in the ranks into an intelligent fighting man. The result was that in action the Allied troops did not perfunctorily loose off their cartridges at the landscape in general. Each man of them tried to kill as many Germans as he could. Hence the tremendous difference in the effectiveness of the rifle fire on the two sides; and, of course, when it came to bayonet work the difference was more marked still. Behind each Belgian, French, or British bayonet was a trained man intelligently determined to do as much damage with it to the enemy as he could. Behind the rows of German bayonets were almost mechanical combatants, whose discipline and courage had already been strained to the breaking point by the fearful ordeal through which they had been marched. Of course, they did not want to wait for the cold steel.

Yet it is not to be denied—as indeed the Belgians admitted without reservation—that up to this point the unfortunate German soldiers showed most stoical courage. The blame for the disaster rested with their commander. It was as though he had heard that you cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs, and so flung a whole basketful of eggs upon the floor to show himself a cook!

Contrast this with the wiser and, as it proved, much more rapid method adopted against the equally strong fortress of Namur later on. Then the first news which we received came, at the end of a long telegram describing the continued advance of the German Army towards Paris, in the following words:—"They (the Germans) have, too, partially invested Namur and opened upon its forts with heavy artillery." This was, of course, the right course to adopt in attacking a ring fortress. Such a fortress is comparable to an encircling wall, and the first thing to do is to invest it and make a breach in it. Then and not till then is the time to send masses of infantry forward—through the breach. At Liège the masses of infantry were sent against the unbroken wall. At Namur the fire of the heavy guns was so overwhelming that the ring was broken in several places almost simultaneously. No wonder that at Liège the



THE CHURCH AT VISÉ.
Probably the First Church Destroyed by the Germans.

[Newspaper Illustrations]

Germans were sent staggering back or that at Namur they quickly advanced to victory.

To understand why Liège could not be taken by assault, in spite of the great force which was hurled upon it; why, up to a certain point, it was able to resist the determined and continuous attack subsequently made upon it by superior force; and also why it inevitably fell, we must have a clear picture of the defences in our minds. The diagram maps published on pages 340 and 341 illustrate the main facts of the position, and we must remember that the ring of twelve forts was 33 miles in circumference, and that they were situated each about four miles from the town and on the average about two to three miles from one another. Thus the interval between fort and fort was too large to be held by a garrison which was numerically so weak as was the force under General Leman's command. It is true that during the earlier stages of the fighting, when the German attack developed only on a narrow front, the superior mobility of the Belgian forces, moving hither and thither on short interior lines of communication, enabled them on each occasion to oppose a withering machine-gun and rifle fire to the German advance and even to fling back the shattered ranks of the assailants finally with resolute bayonet charges; but this advantage was lost so soon as the widening area of the German attack involved so many of the forts that no man could be spared from the defender's trenches between any two of them to strengthen the defence elsewhere. It was then that the necessity of withdrawing the field forces became apparent to General Leman, who elected to hold out with the forts alone. By this time, however, the 400 guns, which represented the total armament of the forts, were both outnumbered and outclassed by the heavy artillery which the Germans had brought into position, and the last stand of Liège was quite hopeless. All that General Leman could hope to do—and grandly succeeded in doing—was to delay the German advance a little longer and to make sure that the forts on falling into the hands of the enemy should be only masses of ruins.

The conflicting nature of the accounts which were published at the time concerning the resistance offered by the forts was largely due to confusion between the large and the small forts. Of the ring of 12, three on the north and east, namely Pontisse, Barchon, and Fléron, and three on the west and south, namely, Loncin, Flémalle, and Boncelles, were large and strong. The other six were comparatively small and unimportant as strongholds, although if the whole ring had been held

by an adequate force they would have continued to be, as they were at first, invaluable as buttresses to the fighting line and connecting links between the large forts.

They were not, however, strong enough, when isolated, to withstand a siege with modern artillery; and in regarding Liège as a ring fortress for this purpose only the six forts named above should be taken into consideration; and when the Germans claimed to have demolished three of the south-eastern forts, namely, Embourg, Chaudfontaine, and Évegnée, this did not really affect the claim of the Belgians that "the forts on the east and south," namely, Barchon, Fléron, and Boncelles, were "still holding out." All of the larger forts were constructed upon the same plan, being triangular in shape, with a moat on each side and guns at each corner. In the centre of the interior space was a steel turret with two 6in. howitzers, and in a square round this four other steel turrets, all armed with 5in. quick-firing guns. All these turrets were embedded in one solid concrete block; and in addition, besides searchlights and many machine guns, the corners of the triangle held quick-firing guns in disappearing turrets. Against any known artillery at the time of their construction these forts were probably impregnable; and even at the time of the war they were doubtless capable of holding out for months against any ordinary field force. But the big siege guns which the Germans brought against them were another matter; and the daily legend, "Liège forts still holding out," only continued to be true until they had been bombarded.

In order to understand some of the curious incidents in the first stages of the attack upon Liège we must remember that the same secret preparations which succeeded so well in Luxemburg had been made in Liège also. In many of the houses, occupied by unsuspected citizens who were really secret German agents, were found thousands of rifles, quickfiring guns, and sets of harness, intended for the armament of the Germans who had entered the city in mufti and unarmed. It was this arrangement, only very partially successful, which nearly cost the life of General Leman on the occasion when Colonel Marchand was killed, at the beginning of the siege, because it enabled a party of armed Germans surreptitiously to surround the house where the Commandant was conferring with the General Staff. Various accounts are given of the mêlée which followed, but all agree as to the circumstance of Colonel Marchand's death and the saving of General Leman by an officer of Herculean build who



BRAVO, BELGIUM!

This cartoon, reproduced by special permission of the proprietors of "Punch," admirably expresses the true spirit of the Belgians' resistance to German aggression.

forced him over the wall of an adjoining foundry.

It was, no doubt, this startling discovery of the presence of concealed enemies in Liège which led General Leman—who in many of his methods and the personal enthusiasm which he evoked reminds the British reader of Baden-Powell in Mafeking—to lay the trap which led

to the annihilation of one German band and the capture of another.

From the welter of confused accounts of the bloody happenings on the night of August 7 one fact seems to stand out boldly, that, while the German demand for an armistice for the alleged purpose of burying their dead was supposed to be still under consideration,



PLACE ST. LAMBERT AND PALACE OF JUSTICE, LIÈGE.

German troops succeeded in entering the town of Liège and fierce street fighting ensued, as a result of which the greater part of the Belgian garrison retreated in good order from the town. Unfortunately, as at Visé, some of the inhabitants had taken a prominent part in the fighting, and in retaliation the Germans shot every one, man, woman, or child, who fell into their hands. There appears to be no doubt that this was done, or that it was done by order.

A semi-official statement, issued in Berlin on August 9, ran:—"According to news received here about the operations around Liège the civilian population took part in the struggle, and German troops and doctors were fired upon from ambush. . . . It is possible that these facts were due to the mixed population in industrial centres, but it is also possible that France and Belgium are preparing a *franc-tireur* war against our troops. If this is proved by further facts our adversaries are themselves responsible if the war is extended with inexorable strength to the guilty population. The German troops are only accustomed to fight against the armed power of a hostile State, and cannot be blamed if in self-defence they do not give quarter."

If the severely judicial note of the first part of this proclamation had been maintained in the conduct of the troops in the field the world might have had little reason to complain of Teuton brutality. Non-combatant Belgians undoubtedly took part in the defence of Liège as well as of Visé.

But everything had happened so suddenly through the treacherous completeness of Germany's plans for the invasion of Belgium without warning that there had been little time for the Belgian authorities to issue any effective advice to the Belgian population as to the rules of war regarding non-combatants. Every effort was made indeed to placard the villages with warning notices; but there is no evidence that such notices were or could have been placarded in the neighbourhood of Liège in time to anticipate the events of August 5.

If, moreover, there could be any circumstances in which the plain duty of an invader was to waive the strictness of the rules of war and to strain his spirit of mercy and forbearance to the utmost those circumstances were present here: because the German Government openly admitted before the world that it was doing a "wrong" to Belgium by breaking down her sanctioned neutrality. Indeed, unless international law is based upon some lower ideal of justice than that which inspires all civilized law as between man and man, the Germans could not lawfully appeal to the rules of war at all. The armed burglar cannot take legal proceedings for assault against a householder who arrests him. It is true that according to law the right to arrest belongs to the police, and that one ordinary civilian who violently seizes another commits an assault; but the armed burglar, by doing wrong himself in the first instance and thus provoking the plucky householder to seize him, has deliberately discarded that status of

ordinary citizenship which would have entitled him to protection by the law.

If, then, there had been an adequate force behind international law, as there is behind the ordinary law of all civilized countries, the Belgian civilian who resisted the German invader should have been able to say to his opponent, as the householder can say to the armed burglar: "If I kill you, it is only justifiable homicide, but if you kill me, it is murder." This difference in their positions before the law would directly follow from the fact that the burglar had caused the whole trouble *by doing wrong*. Yet we have the spectacle of the German Government admittedly doing wrong and at the same time claiming the right to take extreme advantage of international law!

Moreover, even if the German Government had not deliberately placed itself outside the pale of international law by committing the "wrong" to which it brazenly pleaded guilty, any claim which it might have to execute international law would only hold against those who had committed breaches of that law. Great latitude is necessarily given to civilized commanders in the field in interpreting the law of war and in carrying out their judgments. A civilian strongly and reasonably suspected of having fired upon the enemy's troops, who has fallen into that enemy's hands, cannot claim

to be defended by counsel; nor is he often able to call witnesses in his behalf. His trial is brief, often with—it is to be feared—a strong bias against him in the mind of his judge. The fact that in war time many an innocent citizen thus gets shot by the enemy as a spy is one which international law is forced to overlook as one of the incidental evils of war, which can be neither prevented nor remedied. But this shooting of an innocent citizen on suspicion only, after a mockery of a "trial," is the utmost limit to which the inflamed passions of civilized men can claim the sanction of international law in shedding innocent blood. There is no "law," human or divine—or one might even say devilish—which could sanction the hideous and wholesale atrocities committed in Liège by these sanctimonious apostles of German culture.

Still further—in order to leave no loophole for casuistry to wriggle out of the frightful charge recorded against Germany in this war—even if the German Government had not, on its own admission, placed itself outside the pale of international law, and even if the outrages committed by its agents had not gone far beyond the worst form of reprisal which that law could sanction, this mock-serious "warning" of reprisal was deliberately issued by the German Government *after it knew that the bloody deeds had already been done*.



SQUARE OF THE VIRGIN, LIÈGE, BEFORE BOMBARDMENT.



CHURCH OF ST. JACQUES, LIÈGE.

It was on August 9 that in Berlin the Kaiser's Government proclaimed: "*If this (that France and Belgium were preparing an illegitimate form of war against the German Army) is proved by further facts our adversaries are themselves responsible if the war is extended with inexorable strength to the guilty population.*" And it was on August 7, two days earlier, that the German Government had full information of the atrocities committed by its troops upon unarmed Belgians in Liège, where there was general massacre of "*tous ceux qui leur sont tombés sous la main, hommes, femmes et enfants.*"

Think of the hideous irony of it all! Here was the armed burglar who had, by his own confessed crime, put himself outside the pale of the law, not only claiming a legal right to execute the householder who resisted him, but also self-righteously threatening to apply "*inexorable strength*" to the rest of the household two days after he had murdered them all and burned down the house.

It has been necessary thus to deal somewhat fully with the terrible charges which lie at the door of the German Government at this point of our narrative, because it was here, in and near Liège, at the very outset of the campaign in Belgium, that the German commanders had a golden opportunity to strike a high and noble keynote of the war. Since their Government had admitted doing a wrong to Belgium and had promised reparation later, they should have realized that they lay under a moral disadvantage and should have done everything

in their power to put themselves right with the Belgian people. Instead of insisting upon their "*right*" to enforce, and even to exceed, the rules of war in dealing with civilian belligerents—like a burglar demanding the observance of Queensberry rules, with additions of his own, in a fight with an aggrieved householder—they should have been watchful for opportunity to exhibit forbearance and clemency to civilians taken in arms, thus illustrating their Government's professed desire to make reparation for its wrongdoing.

But this did not satisfy the Germans. They were in a hurry to begin with. Like a man who has wagered to go round the world in a certain time and has missed his train at the start, they were already infuriated by their own failure to bring up their heavy artillery and ammunition in time to make short work of the Liège forts. They were further enraged by the vigorous resistance of Belgian troops, which they did not expect to find in their way so much; and the fact that patriotic Belgian civilians took part in the fighting caused their fury to boil over. So they sought to terrify the Belgian nation by massacre; and Liège's blood-drenched ashes bore the first signature of the new German war-spirit on Belgian soil—an evil spirit for which, as the evidence shows, not merely the German soldiery were to blame, nor even merely their commanders in the field, but also the coldly brutal centre of military power in Berlin.

Among other specific charges, supported by evidence, which were issued on August 25, by

the British Press Bureau on the authority of the Belgian Minister, it was stated that on August 6, before one of the forts of Liège, the Germans surprised a party of Belgian soldiers engaged in digging entrenchments. The latter, being unarmed, hoisted a white flag; but the Germans ignored this and continued to fire upon the helpless party. On the same day, before Fort Loncin, a case of treacherous abuse of the white flag occurred in the case of a body of German troops who hoisted the signal of surrender and then opened fire at close range upon the party of Belgians sent to take charge of them.

Contrast such conduct as this with the war-spirit of Belgium. The victim of an unprovoked attack and almost unprepared for the storm that had burst upon her, she gave to the world an example of public spirit which electrified Europe. That in the excitement of the moment she struck with both hands at the invader, obviously unaware that the laws of war permit the use of the swordhand only—for the Belgian Government had not had time then to post up in the villages the official warning to civilians not to take part in the conflict—was a venial offence, which a generous enemy would have met by a serious warning of the consequences which would follow its repetition; and for a generous enemy Belgium and her allies would have felt at least respect. But that was not the German way;

and for the evil consequences which followed the brutalization of war in Europe the Kaiser's Government is directly responsible.

General von Emmich was at this period the Commander-in-Chief of the German Army of the Meuse. He had been previously in command of the 10th Army Corps at Hanover, and this, with the 7th Corps, was the part of his force which he employed to carry out the orders that had evidently been given to him to capture Liège quickly at all costs. He used 88,000 men on the first day, increased to 120,000 on the second, against the Belgian 22,500, which the Germans knew to be inadequate for the complete defence of the fortress; and what was more natural than that he should have determined, even without the explicit orders from Berlin, to sweep them out of his path as a preliminary to swift advance through Belgium towards the French frontier? His officers certainly believed that they had an easy job before them—a task *pour rire*, as one of them, a prisoner, explained afterwards—and entered into action in the gayest spirits. Bitter must have been their disappointment when the great 7th Army Corps, after concentrating its attack upon the three eastern forts—namely, Barchon, Évegnée, and Fléron—was met with such devastating artillery fire from the forts and such well-directed machine-gun and infantry fire from the trenches and



THE CLOISTERS, PALACE OF JUSTICE.



A RUINED STREET IN LIÈGE.

(Newspaper Illustrations.)

barricades which had been thrown up between them that only a remnant came reeling back.

The value of the success gained by the Belgians in withstanding the first German onset was incalculable. Not only did it destroy one large factor in the Kaiser's scheme for the conquest of France, *i.e.*, the belief that, as he himself had said, he could sweep through Belgium as easily as he could wave his hand; not only did it disarrange the time-table by which the conquest of France was to be completed before Russia could come to her assistance; it also shattered the European reputation of the Kaiser's Army for invincibility; it had been supposed that German officers necessarily were prodigies of military efficiency and that the troops which they commanded were the most perfect man-slaying machine which human genius and German "thoroughness" could create. But at Liège the German commanders showed themselves to be grievous bunglers in setting their men tasks which mere flesh and blood could not perform, while the men also showed themselves to be inept with the rifle and to have a wholesome dislike for the bayonet. British troops made these discoveries on their own account later; but in the initial stages of the campaign in Belgium it was worth another 100,000 men to General Leman that his soldiers should know that they had only to use their rifles and bayonets with intelligence and courage to beat the Germans every time if they met on anything like equal terms.

At the outset, therefore, General von Emmich's effort to overrun Liège—to "take it in his stride," as it were, on his march to Paris—with the 7th Army Corps failed utterly; and when the 7th was reinforced by the 10th and 9th Corps, and six of the forts were simultaneously attacked, no better results, from the German point of view, followed the assault in force.

That the Belgians should thus have held up 120,000 of the best German troops for two whole days of fierce fighting was a splendid feat of arms which gladdened the hearts of the Allies as an omen of ultimate victory.

Some notion of the carnage which resulted from the German method of attack may be gathered from the following description given by a Belgian officer who took part in the defence:—

"As line after line of the German infantry advanced, we simply mowed them down. It was terribly easy, monsieur, and I turned to a brother officer of mine more than once and said, 'Voilà! They are coming on again, in a dense, close formation! They must be mad!' They made no attempt at deploying, but came on, line after line, almost shoulder to shoulder, until, as we shot them down, the fallen were heaped one on top of the other, in an awful barricade of dead and wounded men that threatened to mask our guns and cause us trouble. I thought of Napoleon's saying—if he said it, monsieur; and I doubt it, for he had no

care of human life!—‘C’est magnifique, mais ce n’est pas la guerre!’ No, it was slaughter—just slaughter!

“So high became the barricade of the dead and wounded that we did not know whether to fire through it or to go out and clear openings with our hands. We would have liked to extricate some of the wounded from the dead, but we dared not. A stiff wind carried away the smoke of the guns quickly, and we could see some of the wounded men trying to release themselves from their terrible position. I will confess I crossed myself, and could have wished that the smoke had remained!

“But, would you believe it, this veritable wall of dead and dying actually enabled these wonderful Germans to creep closer, and actually charge up the glacis! Of course, they got no further than half-way, for our maxims and rifles swept them back. Of course, we had our own losses, but they were slight compared with the carnage inflicted upon our enemies.”

In spite of these terrible experiences General von Emmich appears to have adhered to the old-fashioned German idea that a fortress like Liège could be rushed if you only hurled a sufficient number of men against it. But the third day of the assault added nothing to the result of the previous two, except that a division of German cavalry which had forded the Meuse was surprised and cut up by the Belgian Mixed Brigade; and the 9th German Army Corps had been brought to a standstill by the side of the 7th and 10th, with enormous losses—although these do not appear to have approached the number of 25,000 given in contemporary accounts, which was more than the strength of the entire Belgian garrison. Yet how severely the Germans’ advance had indeed been checked appeared from their request for an armistice of 24 hours to bury the dead and collect the wounded; and it was not inhumanity but reasonable distrust of German honour which prompted the Belgian commander’s refusal.



EFFECT OF GERMAN SHELL FIRE.

[Newspaper Illustrations.]



LEFT SIDE OF THE FAMOUS BRIDGE AT LIÈGE.
Blown up by Belgians to impede the German Advance.

[Newspaper Illustrations.]

Practically the sole witnesses of this terribly unequal duel between the advancing German hosts and the intrepid defenders of Liège were the Dutch, who at Maestricht, just within the safe frontier of Holland, were almost within eyeshot of it all. Thus, on the afternoon of the fateful August 6 came the following glimpse through the fog of war which had settled around Liège from a correspondent at Maestricht:—

"I could clearly see from the hill the Germans in little boats and others building a pontoon over the Meuse south of Visé. The horses were swum across. The crossing was carried out in half a dozen places with great regularity. The Germans did not seem much concerned at the fire of the Belgian forts. The Belgian troops were spread out over the rising ground. Fire from a German mitrailleuse kept the Belgians at a distance, and slowly the whole hillside became covered with German soldiers, who drove the Belgians before them.

"By 5 o'clock a large force of Germans had crossed the Meuse and commenced to march south on Liège. The Belgians tried to harass the Germans by firing into the progressing columns. At last the Belgians cease firing

and retire. From the houses along the road the people take to flight in despair.

"In the village of Eben I find people calm, looking with astonishment at the tremendous body of troops passing along the route. They were not molested at all as the Germans progressed towards Liège along both banks of the Meuse.

"With characteristic optimism Germans said, 'In two days we will have Liège, and within a week we will be before Paris.'"

This brief telegram gives a picturesque but accurate summary of the whole tenor of the campaign not only before Liège but beyond Liège and Namur and Brussels to the line where they first encountered the shock of the allied French and British in battle. First, we see the steady inexorable advance of the German hosts swarming forward like ants—even when, as happened later, the ground was increasingly cumbered with their own dead. We see the spirited but futile counter-attacks of the numerically weak Belgian forces. We see in every direction small but gallant parties of the defenders of Belgium swallowed up and destroyed by the advancing grey-green flood of German soldiery. In many places we see the



RIGHT SIDE OF BRIDGE AT LIÈGE.

Left side shown on opposite page.

[Newspaper Illustrations.]

rural population fleeing along the crowded roads in mad panic before the German advance. In others, we see them lining the streets of towns and villages, staring in stolid despair at the seemingly interminable hosts of Germans marching in columns to the west.

That is the whole picture of the war around and beyond Liège; but its minor episodes varied dramatically from day to day.

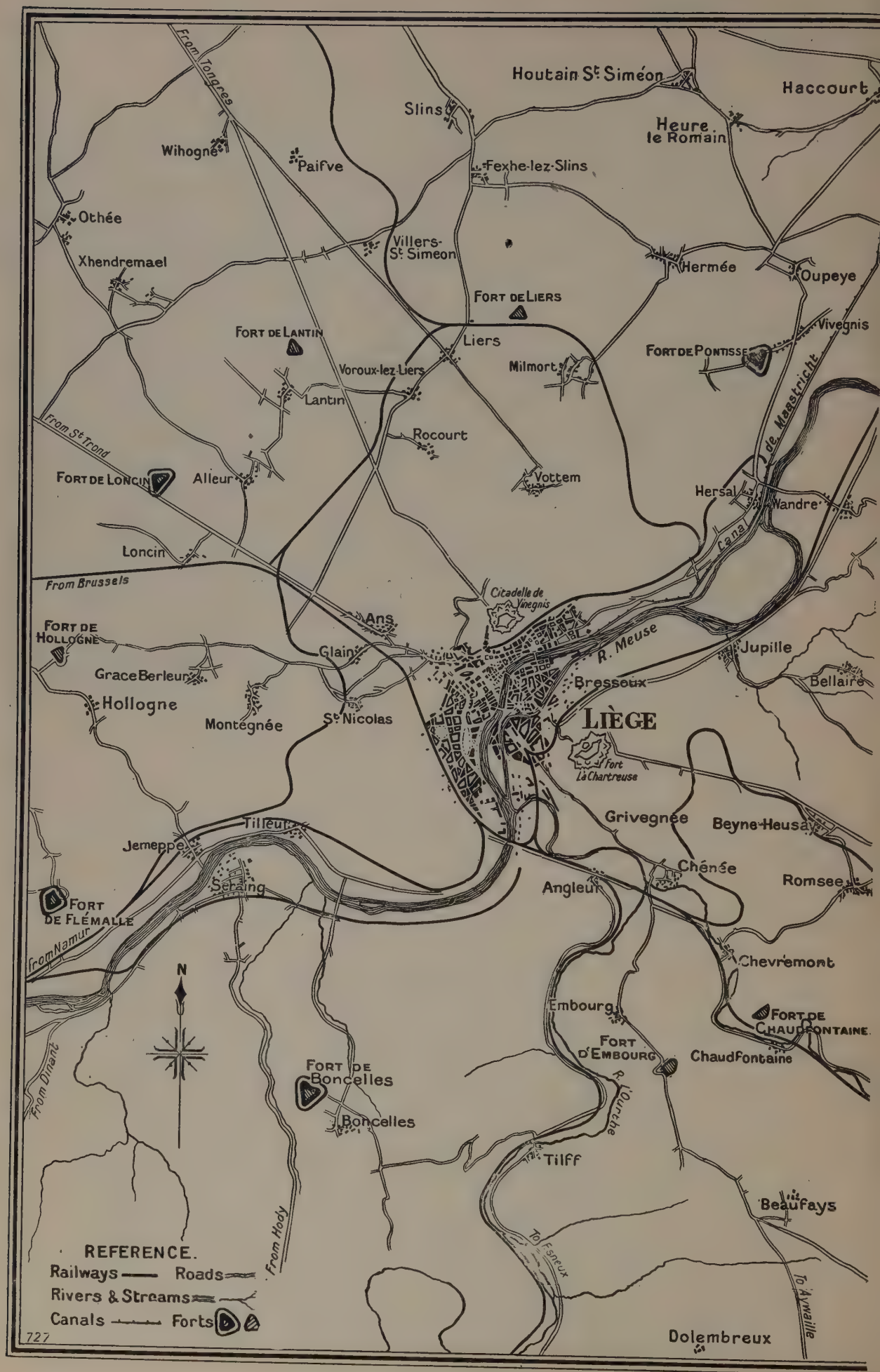
Thus, on the eve of that fateful August day when Liège town surrendered and the forts of Barchon, Évegnée, Fléron, Chaudfontaine, Embourg, and Boncelles were all subjected to bombardment, one counter-attack by the Belgians was crowned with brilliant success.

This was delivered from the heights of Wandre, a position to the west of Barchon, which was the most northerly of the forts then involved. It was in fact an assault upon the outposts on the right flank of the Germans; and the Belgians succeeded in slaughtering many and driving the rest northwards, away from their main army, to Maestricht. From here they were said to have been sent by the Dutch authorities to Aix-la-Chapelle, an instance of misguided assistance to belligerents which

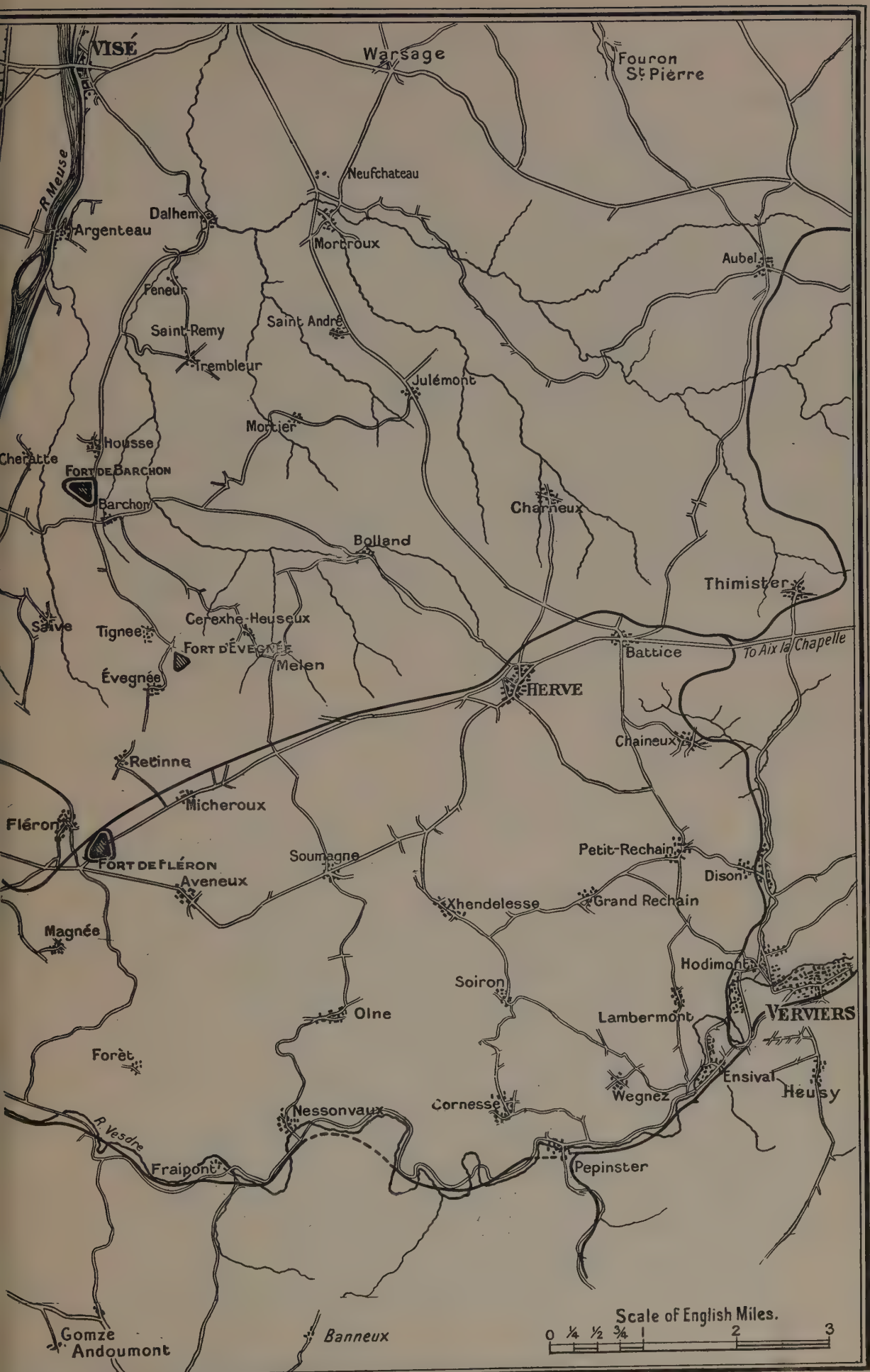
might have raised serious international questions. The Dutch, however, claimed that the only persons thus befriended were German civilian refugees from Belgium; and the neutrality of the Dutch had been so correctly maintained in other respects that this was probably the case, although of course great numbers of the German refugees were spies and military agents.

On the same day, at the other extremity of the semi-circular line of battle, on the outside left, that is to say, of the German advance, the Garde Civique of Liège gained a brilliant little success and practically destroyed an attacking force near the fort of Boncelles. Here, too, international questions were involved, because the Germans insisted upon regarding the Garde Civique as non-combatants.

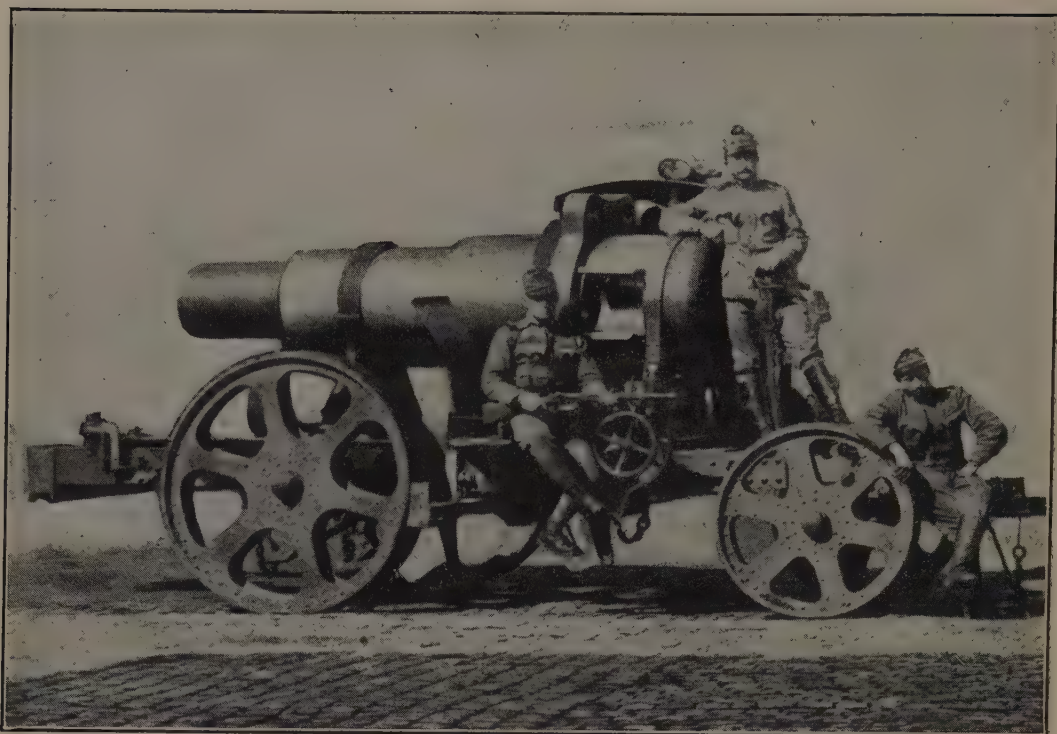
Yet another trivial Belgian success on this day stands out from the battle smoke enveloping two sides of Liège at the Château de Langres. Here the Belgians made a show of resistance before taking to flight; and when the victorious Germans crowded into the stately building, intent on loot, a terrific explosion for a moment drowned even the deafening noise of the big



MAP OF LIÈGE AND THE
 Showing the roads, railways, rivers, etc., and indicating the
 340



SURROUNDING COUNTRY.
difference between the large and small forts defending Liège.



ONE OF THE FAMOUS GERMAN SIEGE GUNS.

[Newspaper Illustrations.

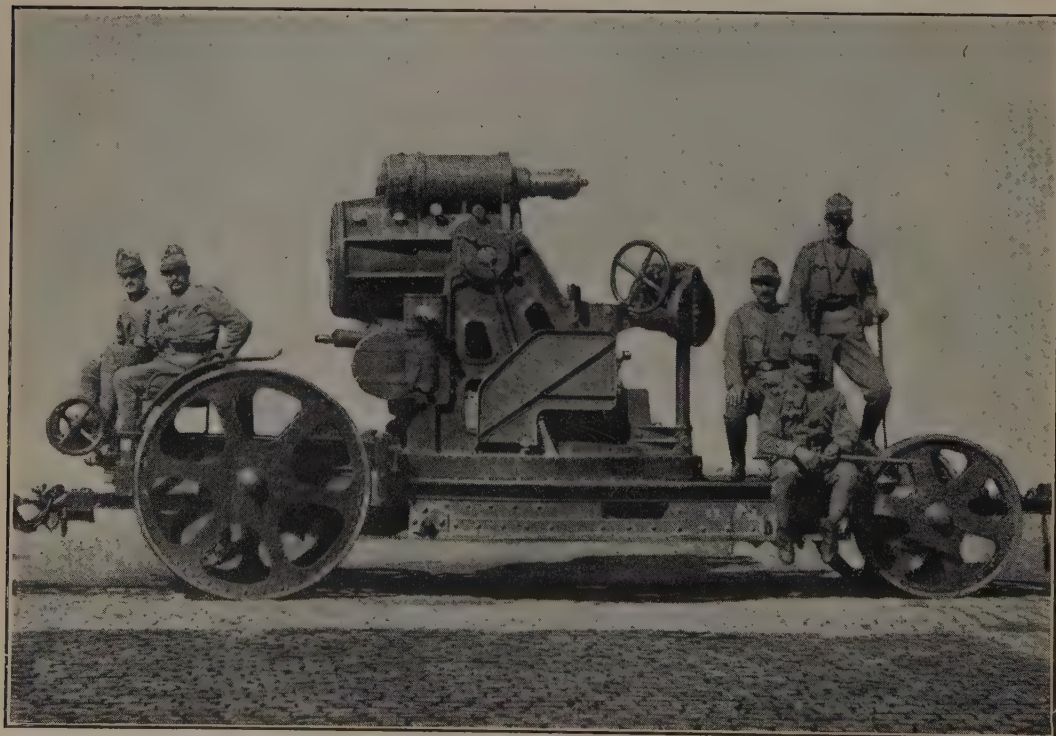
This photograph shows part of gun mounted on a special trolley to facilitate transport. The photograph below illustrates the lower mounting of the gun, with recoil cylinders. The gun is mounted up and placed on a concrete foundation for firing.

guns which were battering the forts. The château had been skilfully mined.

Thus the fortunes of the day seemed to vary so much in detail that the Belgians, who had taken many prisoners and seven guns and had

certainly defeated the crack corps of Brandenburg, were elated with the result.

Already, too, the gallant defence of Liège had won for the city the highest honour which the French Government could bestow. Anti-



MOUNTING OF THE GUN SHOWN ABOVE.

[Newspaper Illustrations.

cipating the impulse of gratitude and admiration which went out not only from France but from the entire civilized world to this battered and blood-stained Walloon town, M. Poincaré, President of the Republic, sent on August 7 the following message to the King of the Belgians:—

"I am happy to announce to your Majesty that the Government of the Republic has just decorated with the Legion of Honour the valiant town of Liège.

"It wishes thus to honour the courageous defenders of the place and the whole Belgian Army, with which since this morning the French Army sheds its blood on the battlefield.

"RAYMOND POINCARÉ."

To the Belgian nation no doubt many names, both of regiments and individuals, have been consecrated by the martyrdom of Liège as worthy to be placed with that of General Leman in the roll of undying honour; and even to the necessarily superficial view of the international historian the valour of the 13th Mixed Brigade in meeting the brunt of the German assault stands out as a permanent record of fame. The successful charge of a single squadron of the Belgian lancers upon six squadrons of German cavalry was another brilliant episode of arms which Belgians will never forget when the Great War is discussed; while of individual heroes—from Colonel Marchand, who gave his life for his chief, to Private Demolin, who carried out a bayonet charge on his own account against the advancing Germans and returned safely after killing four—these were enough at Liège alone to satisfy any nation's pride. Of the Belgian heroes of Liège, Europe will always cherish a grateful memory.

But the high hopes awakened by these Belgian successes, which had so deservedly earned this tribute from the French Republic, were entirely fallacious in so far as they encouraged the belief that the Germans had been worsted in a trial of strength. This was not so. Nothing which the Belgians could have hoped to do could have been of any avail against the overwhelming German numbers and the great guns which slowly lumbered up into position and to which the Belgians had no artillery that could hope to reply effectively; nor any fortifications that could offer resistance. According to eye-witnesses, nothing so terrible had ever been seen in war as the effect of the great shells fired into the Liège forts. Men were not simply killed or wounded; they were blackened, burnt, and smashed. No wonder that three of the forts, although they had been expected to hold out for at least a month, surrendered within the week, when the real bombardment



DISMANTLED CUPOLA.

[Newspaper Illustrations.]

began. Indeed, the only reason why all the forts in the ring around Liège were not quickly reduced was the difficulty encountered by the Germans in bringing up these monstrous engines and moving them into position.

Although many rumours had been rife on this subject, it was not until September 22, more than a month after the centre of war interest had been shifted from Liège, that any detailed account of the method by which these big 42cm. (16.4in.) siege guns travelled was received. For its hauling each gun required no fewer than 13 traction engines. Each gun was in four pieces and each piece was drawn by three engines, the extra engine going ahead to test the road and being used as a helper up hills. The engines were all of the broad-wheeled steam-roller type, and it was noted, as a sort of compliment to British engineering, that very nearly all the engines bore the name plates of an English firm. The delay in getting these guns for ward was not due to the slow pace of the traction engines, but to the difficulty of finding or making roads suitable for such heavy traffic.

During the first few days of assault upon Liège these siege guns were not available; and the Belgians seemed still to be fighting with success until the morning of the 7th, when the German enveloping movement extended to the north-east beyond Fort Barchon and Fort Pontisse became involved. On the opposite side of the ring fortress—namely, the extreme south-west—Fort Flémalle was also attacked, being bombarded like Pontisse from across the

Meuse, which ran close to both of these forts on the south-eastern side and through the town of Liège, which lay in a direct line between them.

This, however, was the limit for the time being of the effective range of the German artillery from the wooded heights south of the Meuse; and the forts of Loncin, Lantin, and Liers, on the north-west side of the town of Liège, were able to hold out and, with the aid of the small but mobile and energetic force which General Leman still maintained in the open, to embarrass all the attempts of the Germans to cross the Meuse in force.

It would almost seem as if the Belgian headquarters were unaware of the possible value which the second line of defence, consisting of the four north-western forts with the river Meuse across the whole front at a distance of about five miles, might have possessed if it had been strongly held. Even with the skeleton force at his disposal General Leman was able to hold up the main force of the enemy for days on the other side of the river. Even so late as August 21 these forts were still able to harass the Germans by destroying their pontoon bridges across the Meuse. One Belgian gun alone had, it was said,

succeeded in smashing ten of these structures.

On Thursday, August 13, however, the booming of the heavy guns recommenced after two days of quietness. The Germans had succeeded at last in getting them across the Meuse and through the town of Liège. Such elaborate machines of war were these terror-striking guns that the German gunners were not competent to handle them. This was done by specialists from the factories of Messrs. Krupp; and no doubt their admiration of the short work which they made of the Belgian defences was sweetened by patriotic recollections of the way in which Messrs. Krupp, on one excuse after another, had delayed delivery of fortress guns ordered by the Belgian Government until it was too late. Promptitude and dispatch were not characteristics of Messrs. Krupp's dealings with a neutral Power upon which Germany was planning a secret attack. The guns, however, had no more qualms of conscience than the Krupp experts who handled them. They at any rate did their business for the Germans with promptitude and dispatch. The forts were silenced in two hours, one being destroyed in four shots.



GERMAN SOLDIERS STANDING ON ONE OF THE OVERTURNED BELGIAN GUNS.

[Newspaper Illustrations.]



GROUND SURROUNDING ONE OF THE LIÈGE FORTS.
Showing shattered armour plate.

[Daily Mirror.]

Nothing like these guns had been expected, otherwise no doubt much greater efforts would have been made to prevent them from being brought across the Meuse; for, as it was, they introduced a new factor which entirely vitiated all the calculations of the Allies as to the holding power of the fortresses of Liège and Namur:

Owing to the departure of the field troops and the flight of the populace, the demolition of the forts and the capture of General Leman with the survivors of his staff, followed by a rigorous German occupation of the place, nothing in the shape of an authentic record of the last days of Liège before its fall has been available; but the following facts deserve permanent record.

The German attack commenced on the night of Tuesday, August 4, with an advance of the 7th Army Corps against the Forts Fléron and Évegnée. The point was well chosen because the approach was made through undulating and heavily-wooded country, in which the troops were able to occupy a natural semi-circle, opposite which an interval of more than three miles separated Fléron from Fort Chaudfontaine on her right. This space was, of course, strongly entrenched and occupied by Belgian troops full of the courage and confidence engendered by their previous successes. This was shown by the fate of the 3rd Battalion of the German 125th Regiment, which, in taking up position, got too close to the Belgian lines and was cut to pieces. By the lurid light of

subsequent events such successes seem trivial indeed; but the excitement of the moment had magnified them into victories. Nevertheless, had the Germans been able to employ the same tactics here as they did subsequently at Namur and deferred action until they were able to concentrate an insupportable artillery fire from heavy guns simultaneously upon all the forts and the trenches between them, the result would not have been many hours in doubt. Instead, after an ineffective bombardment of the two forts selected for attack with badly-timed shells which made no impression upon them, masses of infantry were sent forward. Of course, the inevitable happened. Under the glare of searchlights the solid ranks of men were simply mowed down by machine guns and field guns, until the shattered remnant was ripe for retreat before the bayonets with which the already victorious Belgians charged upon them from the trenches.

Thus the first attack of the 7th Army Corps was brilliantly, if easily, repulsed; and on the morning of the 5th the Liège forts on the east opened fire upon the Germans and the latter replied; but, although the noise of the guns drove the inhabitants of Liège into their cellars at first, it was soon discovered that there was little danger, because the enemy evidently had few guns in position and these were out-classed by the artillery in the forts. So during the day most of the Liégeois learned, as besieged peoples do so quickly, to play hide-and seek with the shells, bolting into shelter only when the

look-out bell, signalling the flash of a German gun, was heard.

During the day, however, there were ominous rumours that the Germans had threatened a heavy bombardment of the town unless both it and the surrounding forts were surrendered; and it was stated that, while the Mayor, in order to save the helpless houses from destruction, was then willing to yield, General Leman decisively refused to give up the forts. Then real panic seized part of the population, who stormed the train leaving the city, while many returned to their cellars.

So the day of dread passed, and on the following day (August 6) the Germans, having got their heavy guns into position, commenced bombardment of the town as well as the forts. One shell completely wrecked the roof of the Cathedral, and the University—which the Germans appear to have mistaken for the Government House, as they made it a special target—was destroyed; but most of the buildings were still intact when the town surrendered, though the forts still strove to maintain the unequal struggle.

Meanwhile the invaders marched into Liège, singing patriotic songs, but maintaining good order; although a hint of the German methods

was immediately given to the people in a proclamation by the German Commander that if a single shot were fired the town would be devastated.

The actual bombardment of the town occupied only seven hours, with an interval of one hour; but many people were killed and wounded and the general effect was so terrible that further resistance would have been useless folly on the part of the unprotected town, since it could do nothing now to aid the doomed forts.

To understand why Liège thus surrendered in the midst of a seemingly brilliant defence, we must realize that when the attack which commenced on August 5 was continued until the morning of the 6th by the united strength of the 7th, 10th, and 9th Corps, the chief brunt of the extended assault fell farther to the south between the forts of Flémalle, Boncelles, and Embourg; and to meet this the Belgian general was compelled to move down his field force to fill the entrenchments between those forts. Although here also the German advance of massed infantry was again met and repulsed, the simultaneous reopening of the attack upon Forts Fléron and Èvegnée warned General Leman of the inadequacy of his force to hold the entire 33-mile



THE LIÈGE FORTS.

A photograph taken after bombardment.

[Newspaper Illustrations.]



EFFECT OF FIRING ON CUPOLAS.

[C. Bendall.]

Top dotted line shows the line of flight of siege howitzer shell, finally bursting on top of cupola, the exact range having been ascertained by the Germans long before war was declared. The bottom dotted lines represent field-gun fire and show shell glancing off cupola.

circle of the fortress. He wisely took the warning, and even in the hour of victory successfully sent back his little field army across the Meuse, leaving the town of Liège open to the invaders.

Thus the very peculiar position was created of a great industrial city, only partially demolished by bombardment, peaceably occupied in force by an enemy who had appointed a military government and had entrenched his forces in the suburbs, surrounded by the forts which had been constructed for its defence and were still occupied by the defenders.

The explanation of this unique situation was, however, simple. There was now nothing whatever to prevent the free passage of German troops, especially in small parties and at night, through the wide intervals between the forts, thus keeping open the communications between the investing force and the force in occupation of the town; while on the other side the Belgian forts refrained from opening fire upon the town from patriotic considerations. In war, however, obedience to the nobler sentiments is usually—at any rate temporarily—costly, and the Germans in Liège of course took advantage of the inaction of the forts to entrench themselves more completely while the siege batteries were being erected for the final demolition of the forts.

Thus ended Act I. of the drama of Liège; and although the fortune of war had no choice but to declare on the side of the “big battalions”—or, perhaps it would be more correct to say, the “big guns”—the honours of the war lay so completely on the Belgian side that the report—often contradicted

and as often “confirmed”—that the German Commander, General von Emmich, had committed suicide excited no surprise. Whatever the orders given to him may have been and however great may have been the difficulties which he had encountered in bringing up his heavy siege guns, the attempt to rush a modern fortress with mere masses of flesh and blood was not even magnificent—and it certainly was not war.

A remarkable contrast to the unfortunate, blundering von Emmich was presented by General Lemian, the astute and cool-headed defender of Liège. Although a martinet in discipline, his own life was so strictly soldierly that he commanded the absolute loyalty of all ranks under him. Like Lord Roberts, he seemed incapable of fatigue; and it is related of him, before the outbreak of the war, that he would often after a ride of 30 miles return to the Military School, of which he was Commandant, and discuss strategical and tactical problems with his officers until early morning. Many other anecdotes are told to his credit, for he evidently possessed the remarkable personality which almost always distinguishes the born commander. Thus the two most striking incidents which are narrated by the survivors of Liège relate to him personally. One of these is to the effect that by means of a clever ruse, “the character of which [says the special correspondent who narrates it] had better be left undescribed,” the General tempted a number of Uhlans to enter the town of Liège on the morning of August 6 in the hope of

capturing him. The Uhlans came in two patrols, every man of the first being killed and of the second captured.

The other incident occurred when, according to the Brussels Special Correspondent of *The Times*, two German spies, disguised as French officers, gained access to the town and desired to be conducted to the General. "Their plan miscarried, however, and they were arrested just in the nick of time. They were taken out and shot at one of the gates of the town."

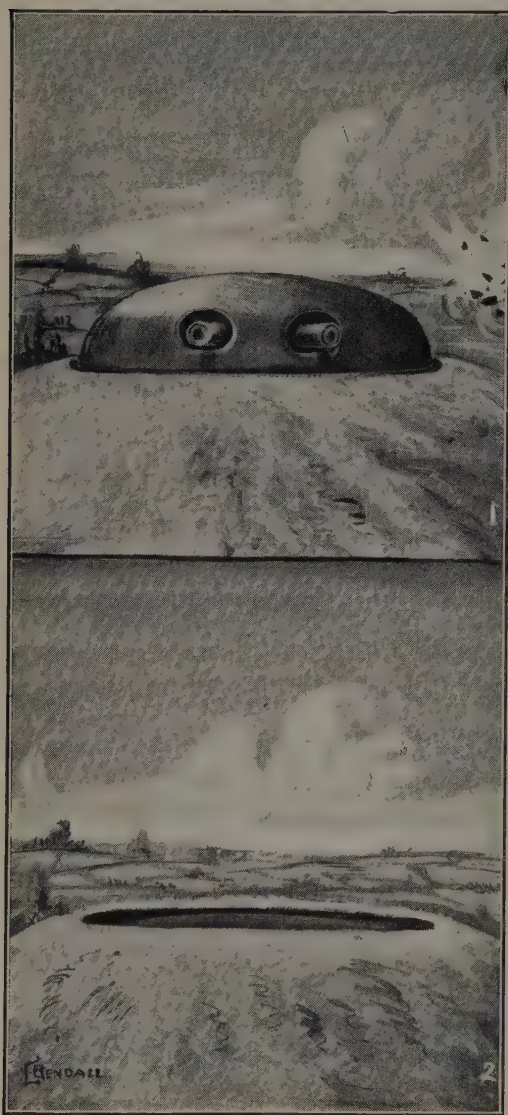
Although such narratives may have little connexion with the serious history of the war, they are interesting as showing the great influence which the personality of General

Leman had upon the opening phase of the campaign. It is probable that when, as commander of the Liège garrison, he was shut up in the fortress, and later was nearly killed in the explosion of Fort Loncin and taken prisoner by the Germans, Belgium lost the services of one of its finest soldiers.

In addition to his practical mastery of strategy and tactics in the field, he was a recognized expert in Roman law, military architecture, and engineering science. With ready skill he had so handled the opening phase of the great game of war, which his country was playing for her very existence, as to inflict greater damage than perhaps even he could have hoped upon the enemy, and then to extract his force from a position that was destined to become almost immediately hopeless. Thus he brilliantly commenced that long series of withdrawals before superior force which marked the whole of the first chapter of the great war, until in fact the wearying German hosts were brought up "with a round turn" almost under the walls of Paris.

The great fault of the German attack upon Liège was its total lack of co-ordination. It commenced with an ineffective bombardment against which the Belgian artillery, whose fire was accurate and well-directed, easily held their own, with the result that during the three hours' duel two heavy pieces of German artillery had been destroyed by the guns of Fort Évegnée, where not a man was killed or wounded and the cupola was undamaged. Having thus completely failed to prepare the way for an assault, the German commander, nevertheless, flung a solid army corps at the fortress. As was inevitable, the advancing ranks were cut down like standing wheat by the concentrated fire from the trenches and the forts. The trenches were never reached, and the 7th Army Corps staggered back more than decimated.

Next day, when it was too late to repair his initial blunder, General von Emmich began to make some use of his superior strength by bringing the 10th Army Corps, the famous Iron Division of Brandenburg, to the support of the 7th, and thus extending the front of his operations so that five of the Liège forts, instead of two only, were involved. Later the 9th Army Corps and a division of cavalry were brought up to assist the other two, and thus the entire force of 120,000 men to which the Kaiser had entrusted the prospective honour of sweeping through Belgium to the French frontier was held up before Liège by General Leman and 40,000 Belgians. So unequal a



No. 1 DIAGRAM SHOWS A CUPOLA RAISED FOR FIRING. No. 2 SHOWS CUPOLA LOWERED. [C. Bendall.]

These cupolas were main features of the Brialmont system of ring-fortresses, which have been proved by this war to be incapable of withstanding artillery heavier than their own.



ANOTHER TYPE OF GERMAN GUN—SIEGE HOWITZER.

[Record Press.]

contest could not, however, be maintained indefinitely ; and although the second German onslaught was no more effective than the first, the ill-served artillery proving unable to make more impression on the forts than the mis-directed infantry fire had upon the trenches, while the massed cavalry had no opportunities at all, nevertheless General Leman recognized that he had done all that could be prudently attempted to stay the German advance, and adroitly withdrew before his powerful enemy could recover from his second staggering blow.

The chief excuse which can be offered for the German mismanagement of the attack upon Liège is that the Belgian resistance must have come upon General von Emmich as a surprise. All his plans were made with a view to a rapid advance through Belgium towards France. These plans were in complete readiness before the ultimatum to Belgium was sent. Indeed, a calculation of the time necessarily occupied by the German corps in getting from their headquarters in Germany to the frontier shows that they must have commenced their march on July 31, before the declaration of war. The disposition of the entire Belgian force at the time was well known to the German staff, and no considerable part of the Belgian Field Army was on August 3 nearer than Diest, where the 3rd Division, under General Leman, was stationed. So there is little doubt that the German commander, when he arranged

his night attack upon Liège on August 5, imagined that he had only to reckon with the garrison of the forts and one mixed brigade of the Belgian Army. His intention apparently was to engage heavily the three eastern forts with his artillery and push his forces through the wide intervals between them, when the town of Liège in the centre would have been at his mercy. What he had not calculated upon apparently was the possibility that in the 48 hours which had elapsed between the delivery of the ultimatum and the preparation for attack, General Leman, with the 3rd Belgian Division, would, by forced marches, have covered the 80 miles from Diest to Liège and be occupying the trenches between the forts. This probably explains why the German attack was delivered in such a way as to render disaster inevitable in the circumstances ; and it would seem to show that at the outset the blind confidence of the Germans, that Belgium would be unable and unwilling to offer serious resistance, was such as to render them temporarily oblivious of the plainest dictates of prudence.

In the subsequent phase of the campaign, indeed, when German army corps were crowding upon the rear of the British Army, as it retired, fighting step by step, towards Paris, there was always the same waste of German troops through sending them forward in masses against an entrenched enemy. But there this

prodigality of human life may have been deliberately calculated expenditure, the only weak point of the calculation being that it underestimated the steadiness of the British soldier. Had the Germans been able to smother Tommy Atkins, even with heaps of their own slain, the game would have been worth the stakes. It is just possible, too, that even at Liège the importance of swift passage through Belgium in order to strike France down before help could come to her so dominated all other considerations that prudence in tactics was thrown to the winds. These are the opportunities of the Nemesis which waits upon unjust invaders; and the disaster which marked the first step of the Germans on Belgian soil was ominous.

It was not so accepted in Berlin, however, for news came thence that on the 7th the happy tidings of "the fall of Liège" had spread with lightning-like rapidity throughout the city and created boundless enthusiasm. The Kaiser himself, never reluctant to pose with theatrical effect, sent his own uniformed aide-de-camp out to the crowds before the Palace to give the news, and policemen on bicycles dashed along Unter den Linden with the joyful tidings! Imagination fails utterly to conceive a similar scene being enacted before Buckingham Palace and in the Mall over the first reports of a pre-

liminary success in war. But allowances must be made for the Germans, who knew at the back of their minds that their Emperor had staked all the interests of their country upon a gambler's throw. No wonder that they listened with excitement to the first rattle of the dice, and the German Press rapturously exclaimed that the line of advance into Northern France was assured.

This was not, of course, exactly the way to state the case. So far as the fighting which had then taken place was concerned, the advantage had all been on the side of the Belgians. Yet, as happened more than once during this first phase of the great war, the conclusions drawn from false news of "victories" in Berlin were nearer to the truth than the hopes based upon accurate accounts of successes in Paris or London. The explanation of this seeming anomaly was that the Germans were fighting at this stage—as they had carefully arranged that they should be fighting—with preponderating odds in their favour. So immense was the volume of their initial moving strength that local reverses scarcely checked it at all. They caused little more than swirls in the resistless tide of advance.

So when Berlin, shouting itself hoarse over a victory which had not been won, declared that



ONE OF THE FORTS AT LIÈGE AFTER BOMBARDMENT.

Showing damage caused by German siege guns.

[Daily Mirror.



ANOTHER VIEW OF THE RUINED BRIDGE.

the way was now open to the French frontier, it was nearer to the truth than London, which calculated that, if 40,000 Belgians could thus check the German hosts at Liège, the combined French and Belgian armies might fight a decisively victorious battle not much farther west.

At that time people in England were not thinking much about what the British soldiers might be able to do. They had heard that there was to be a substantial "expeditionary force"; but the very title suggested its employment in some side-issue of the war, and all eyes were fixed in hope upon the gallant defenders of Liège.

Disappointed bewilderment therefore ensued when it was seen that, although the Berlin reports of victory were indubitably false, the subsequent course of events was no better than if they had been true. The German hosts poured through Liège into the heart of Belgium, and the fog of war settled deeply over the ring of forts, which daily bulletins assured us were "still holding out."

Thus it was that the crucial test of war had definitely decided the much-debated question of the value of great ring-fortresses like Liège and Namur. Liège and Namur were sisters, and it is not possible to draw definite conclusions from the determined resistance which one was able to offer to the invader, without considering also the reasons why the other fell so quickly. For both of these strongholds represented the mature genius of

Brialmont in the science of fortification; and the success or failure of both to hold the Germans would have been taken by rival schools of theorists as conclusive evidence for or against the principle of ring-fortresses. What actually happened was therefore entirely unexpected by both sides; for while Liège seemed to crown the memory of Brialmont with glory, all the costly and extensive fortifications of Namur served no better than a trap for its unfortunate defenders.

The fact is that both were strongholds which would have been absolutely impregnable if two conditions had been fulfilled. One condition was that the cupolas of the forts in their beds of cement should be strong enough to resist the enemy's heaviest guns; and the other was that an adequate force should be available to hold the trenches which occupied the intervals between the forts. If these conditions were present Brialmont's ring fortresses might be compared to gigantic entrenched camps, with invincible artillery placed at all the numerous salient angles. Such a position would undoubtedly be impregnable. But at Liège one, and at Namur the other, of these conditions was not present. Namur fell quickly because the Germans, profiting by the experience of Liège, had brought up artillery of sufficient strength to smash the forts by bombardment at the commencement. Liège also fell quickly as a military position, although the forts held out gallantly, because the adequate force to



GERMAN SOLDIERS MARCHING THROUGH LIÈGE.

[Newspaper Illustrations.]

occupy 33 miles of entrenchments was lacking. This was not generally understood outside the war councils of General Joffre and the Belgian King. In Berlin the people rejoiced in the fruits of a fictitious victory, and in Britain the people wondered why victory had no apparent fruits.

Even with all the facts of the situation before us, we are inclined to wonder at the self-sacrificing steadiness with which General Leman adhered to his part in the general plan of campaign. The war which was being waged was so vast that his handful of 40,000 men at Liège was only a pawn in the game. Yet it was a pawn which in the gambit selected had occupied so brilliant a position that a less cool-headed and less dutiful player would have been excused in history if he had been tempted to sacrifice it in a glorious "check" to the opponent. But checkmate was the end for which the Allies were playing; and in the alert and mobile Belgian Army—which, more than a month after the defence of Liège had become past history, commenced to harass the German army corps hurrying Pariswards to help their comrades sorely pressed by those pestilent British—were many men who would have been sleeping in their graves among the ruins of Liège's defences if General Leman had not known when to move back his pawn.

It was dismal experience of the same kind as General French endured when the compact British force, admirably fitted in every detail to be the spearhead of a victorious advance, was

compelled day after day, week after week, to fight rearguard actions against superior forces in order to keep the general plan of campaign intact. The reward of such devotion to duty may seem slow in coming, but it is sure; and in the aggressive activity of the Belgian Army of Antwerp, even after Namur had fallen and Brussels had been occupied, General Leman, then a prisoner in Germany, must have seen, with justifiable pride, a factor of ultimate success to which his own self-denial had largely contributed.

But the really great service which the Belgians, who defended Liège so gallantly had done for the cause of the Allies lay in shattering the Continental superstition that German armies were invincible. This did not affect the British soldier, who always has a cheery confidence—which this war has done nothing to shake—that he is as good a man as anybody else in any company into which he may happen to be thrown by the exigencies of service. But every man in the French ranks was the son of parents who had seen France, after prolonged and desperate resistance, forced under the heel of Prussia; and just when he was nerving himself to the supreme effort to endeavour to right his country's ancient wrong in spite of this previous disparity of strength, it was like a message of hope from heaven to learn that 40,000 Belgians had held back 120,000 Germans for days, slaughtering them wholesale and coming out of the encounter almost unscathed themselves. Thus General Leman's success, fruitless as it

may have seemed in tactical results from a superficial point of view, was infinitely valuable to the Allied Armies in consequence of the new spirit which it gave to all the Continental enemies of Germany. It was the first prick to the bubble of the German reputation.

Equally important was another result of General Leman's success: that it threw out of gear the whole time-table of the German campaign. In any case this would have been a serious matter, because all the detailed arrangements in connexion with the transport of a great army are necessarily co-ordinated with the utmost precision. An army in the field is a vast and complicated fighting machine, of which every nut and bolt must be exactly in its right place at the right moment to ensure smooth working. If any part of it is seriously and suddenly obstructed, the whole machine may be unexpectedly delayed, and it is true of all armies in the field that unexpected delays are very dangerous.

In the case of the German Army which was invading Belgium this was doubly true, because the necessity for promptitude and dispatch in the performance of the task which had been allotted to it was paramount, inasmuch as the greater part of it would almost certainly be required, after defeating France, to hurry back in order to confront Russia. For this reason delay at the outset of its advance amounted to a

defeat much more serious in its consequences than there had been any reason to hope that the Belgian Army would be able to inflict.

To this extent, then, it was easy to award the honour due to General Leman's gallant little force; and it was a happy day for Belgians all over the world—except in Germany—when the news of the Battle of Liège was received. In Berlin, indeed, by some process of sanctimonious casuistry, Belgium, against whom the Kaiser's Government admitted that a wrong had been done, was regarded thenceforward as an associate of the Evil One and a sort of rebel against God, because she fought against the wrong. No German seemed to realize that Belgium by admitting the German Army would in effect be declaring war upon France, and that even the almighty Kaiser could not at that moment have protected Belgium's western frontier from the hostile onslaught which France would have been justified in making. But in all the world, except Germany, the heroism of Belgium was worthily acknowledged, and the newspaper headlines of "Gallant Little Belgium" in every language must have gladdened the eyes of Belgian exiles, who were, of course, not unaware how often in the past the phrase "*les braves belges*" had been used in irony. Thus time brings its revenges and teaches mankind that in the issue between right and wrong the strong are still liable to be humbled by the weak.



GERMAN SENTRIES ON THE BANKS OF THE MEUSE.

These considerations rendered it difficult for contemporary onlookers to appreciate the kind of courage—moral courage of a high order—which the Belgian commander displayed in deliberately depriving himself of the chance of winning further glory, in order that he might not imperil the success of the war drama as a whole by over-acting the minor part which had been assigned to him.

For, when the psychological moment had arrived when, in General Leman's cool judgment, it was time to abandon Liège as a stronghold and use it merely as a *place d'arrêt*, he had sent back his 40,000 men to their place in the Belgian field army, remaining himself as Military Governor of Liège in order to co-ordinate the defence of the forts as much as possible and to exercise moral influence upon the garrison. This is the explanation of his decision given by himself in a pathetic letter written from captivity to his master, the King of the Belgians, narrating how the Fort Loncin, where he had established his headquarters when the town of Liège had

been occupied by the Germans, was blown up, "the greater part of the garrison being buried under the ruins." The letter continues:—

"That I did not lose my life in that catastrophe is due to the fact that my escort, composed of Commandant Collard, a sub-officer of infantry, who has undoubtedly perished, the gendarme Thevenin, and my two orderlies, Vanden Bossche and Jos Lecocq, drew me from a position of danger where I was being asphyxiated by gas from the exploded powder. I was carried into a trench, where a German captain named Gräson gave me drink, after which I was made prisoner and taken to Liège in an ambulance.

"I am convinced that the honour of our arms has been sustained. I have not surrendered either the fortress or the forts. Deign, Sire, to pardon any defects in this letter. I am physically shattered by the explosion of Loncin. In Germany, whither I am proceeding, my thoughts will be, as they have ever been, of Belgium and the King. I would willingly have given my



GENERAL WONTERS AND HIS AIDES-DE-CAMP.

The General who directed most of the tactical moves against the Germans in Belgium.

[Newspaper Illustrations.]



BELGIANS LOADING A GUN.

Actual photograph taken in the firing line.

[Daily Mirror.

life the better to serve them, but death was denied me."

It would scarcely be possible to add a more illuminating commentary to this simple, soldierly letter than the following testimony of a German officer:—

"General Leman's defence of Liège combined all that is noble, all that is tragic.

"As long as possible he inspected the forts daily to see everything was in order. By a piece of falling masonry, dislodged by our guns, both General Leman's legs were crushed. Undaunted he visited the forts in an automobile. Fort Chaudfontaine was destroyed by a German shell dropping in the magazine. In the strong Fort Loncin General Leman decided to hold his ground or die.

"When the end was inevitable the Belgians disabled the last three guns and exploded the supply of shells kept by the guns in readiness. Before this General Leman destroyed all plans, maps, and papers relating to the defences. The food supplies were also destroyed. With about 100 men General Leman attempted to retire to another fort, but we had cut off their retreat. By this time our heaviest guns were in position, and a well-placed shell tore through the cracked and battered masonry and exploded in the main magazine. With a

thunderous crash the mighty walls of the fort fell. Pieces of stone and concrete 25 cubic metres in size were hurled into the air. When the dust and fumes passed away we stormed the fort across ground literally strewn with the bodies of the troops who had gone out to storm the fort and never returned. All the men in the fort were wounded, and most were unconscious. A corporal with one arm shattered valiantly tried to drive us back by firing his rifle. Buried in the *débris* and pinned beneath a massive beam was General Leman.

"'Respectez le général, il est mort,' said an aide-de-camp.

"With gentleness and care, which showed they respected the man who had resisted them so valiantly and stubbornly, our infantry released the general's wounded form and carried him away. We thought him dead, but he recovered consciousness, and, looking round, said, 'It is as it is. The men fought valiantly,' and then, turning to us, added, 'Put in your dispatches that I was unconscious.'

"We brought him to our commander, General von Emmich, and the two generals saluted. We tried to speak words of comfort, but he was silent—he is known as the silent general. 'I was unconscious. Be sure and put that in your dispatches.' More he would not say.

"Extending his hand, our commander said, 'General, you have gallantly and nobly held your forts.' General Leman replied, 'I thank you. Our troops have lived up to their reputations.' With a smile he added, 'War is not like manœuvres'—a reference to the fact that General von Emmich was recently with General Leman during the Belgian manœuvres. Then, unbuckling his sword, General Leman tendered it to General von Emmich. 'No,' replied the German commander, with a bow; 'keep your sword. To have crossed swords with you has been an honour,' and the fire in General Leman's eye was dimmed by a tear."

Many similar authentic cases were recorded during the war of Germans, both officers and men, behaving with true chivalry and kindness to French, British, and Belgian wounded and prisoners. If only this had been the guiding spirit of their conduct in general!

In the foregoing, however, we are anticipating the *finale* of the last chapter of the glorious story of the defence of Liège. The forts, bereft of support from the Belgian Army in the field, with the city and ancient citadel which they were designed to protect in ruins, with an insolent enemy in occupation lording it over the trembling populace—the forts maintained their

gallant resistance, the Military Governor, shut up in one of them, continuing to exercise, so far as was possible, his moral influence upon the scattered garrison.

This was the position of affairs from the night of August 7 onwards, for Liège was then closely invested by the Germans and all communication between the forts and the outer world was completely cut off. They were, however, still intact, and, being well supplied with food and ammunition, they were expected to hold out for a long time.

At the same time the Belgian field force which had taken so brilliant a part in the defence, including the Third Division and the Fifth Brigade, had joined the headquarters of the Belgian Army, when it was reviewed by King Albert, who congratulated all ranks upon their achievement. The Tsar also telegraphed to the King an expression of his sincere admiration for the valiant Belgian Army and his best wishes for their success in this "heroic struggle for the independence of the country."

In the circumstances it was perhaps inevitable that the General Staff of the Belgian Army should have overrated the tactical value of the success which had been achieved; and on the night of August 9 the official announcement was



BELGIAN SOLDIERS.

In front of the tree trunk a pit has been dug, and covered over with branches.

(Underwood & Underwood.)



INSIDE A BELGIAN TRENCH.

[Record Press.]

made that "the offensive movements of the enemy had been completely stopped" and that the French and Belgian Armies would "take offensive action simultaneously in accordance with their concerted plans." If, at this time, offensive action was really contemplated by the Allies, it must have been through lack of perspective, because the losses suffered by the three army corps which had assaulted Liège, heavy as they were, were mere trifles compared with the price which Germany was prepared to pay on the spot for a rapid advance through Belgium upon France.

This more serious note in the struggle had been emphasized in the deep tones of the big guns which had arrived at last and began to speak to the Liège forts in a way that there was no misunderstanding. These heavy siege guns were supposed by Messrs. Krupp and their patrons the German War Department to be the last word in modern artillery, and their existence had been a jealously-guarded secret for "der Tag." It must be admitted, too, that they were a secret worth keeping; for the havoc which they wrought in the forts of Liège was terrible and insupportable. From that day—since the relief of Liège by any adequate force was not possible—the question whether the forts should surrender or be destroyed was only a question of the comparative endurance of steel and concrete on the one hand and of flesh and blood on the other. To the everlasting honour of the Belgians be

it recorded that the indomitable courage of the garrison of Liège outlasted the strength of the shattered cupolas.

Perhaps we cannot more fitly close this blood-stained but glorious chapter in the history of Belgium better than by quoting from the measured utterances of leading British statesmen in the two Houses of Parliament on August 27.

In the House of Commons the Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, rising to propose a resolution of sympathy and gratitude to the Belgian Government and the gallant Belgian nation, said:—

"The defence of Liège (cheers) will always be the theme of one of the most inspiring chapters in the annals of liberty. The Belgians have won for themselves the immortal glory which belongs to a people who prefer freedom to ease, to security, even to life itself. We are proud of their alliance and their friendship." (Cheers.)

He was immediately followed by Mr. Bonar Law, the Leader of the Opposition, who said:—

"Belgium has deserved well of the world. She has added another to the long list of great deeds which have been done by the heroic patriotism of small nations."

As further proof of the solidarity of the British in their admiration of Belgian pluck and prowess, Mr. Redmond, the leader of the Irish Nationalist Party, said that there was no sacrifice which the Irish would not willingly make on behalf of Belgium.

In the House of Lords Lord Crewe, on behalf of the Government, and Lord Lansdowne, speaking for the Unionist majority, expressed similar sentiments; and the former uttered a solemn warning to Germany with regard to the atrocities committed by her troops at Liège. "I do venture to declare," he said, "that any nation that so conducts itself pays, soon or late, and pays to the uttermost farthing."

With the British nation it had already become a serious resolve to see that farthing paid.

The story of Liège leaves us with a sense of having witnessed a drama complete in its theme and glorious in its *motif*. And the glamour of it seemed to ennoble every contemporary reference to its circumstances. At Dublin, on September 25, 1914, the British Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, expressed in measured words no more than the heart-feeling of every man in his vast audience when he said that the indomitable resistance of the Belgians "proved to the world that ideas which cannot be weighed or measured by any material calculus can still inspire and dominate mankind." Those are not the words in which the man in the street would have clothed the thought. He would have been content to say:—"Belgium is in the *right* and, *by God*, we'll see her through!" There are times when an expletive becomes dignified as the very spirit of a sentence; and

this was one of them. The words italicized in the supposititious sentence above, common as it may seem, were the national British expression of the "ideas" which still dominate mankind, in spite of Kaisers. Belgium was "*right*" and "*by God*" we would see her through. That was the idea.

Mr. Asquith rose to the level of that idea. So did Mr. Lloyd George, the Chancellor of the Exchequer; so did Mr. Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty; so did all the other Ministers in their degrees and according to their abilities. So did the leaders of the Opposition. So did the Irish Nationalists and the Ulstermen, lately so ready to fly at one another's throats. So did the Boers and the British, not long ago deadly foes and until then mostly suspicious of each other's motives. So did Canada and Australia and New Zealand. So did all the diverse races with jarring creeds which compose Britain's most magnificent heritage, the loyal Indian Empire. So did all our Crown colonies. So did all our Allies and our friends in other lands.

Nor did Mr. Asquith overstate the case when he said that by establishing this idea Belgium had done more than change the whole face of the German campaign. Even the tremendous political results of the war were not so important as this new unity of mankind in defence of the Right. It is not a coincidence that throughout



AN 11-in. GERMAN MORTAR.

This is the barrel section on a special carriage for transport.

[Record Press.]



BELGIAN SOLDIERS FIRING AT A PASSING AEROPLANE.

[Topical.]

Britain the war period was marked by an amazing absence of crime. There may seem to be no direct antagonism between a scheme of world-war hatched at Potsdam and a burglary planned in Whitechapel. But many a burglar, moved to honest indignation by the German outrage, enlisted as a soldier or found some other way to declare himself on the side of the Right; and thus many police were set free to protect the nation's interests, instead of watching the criminals.

And what happened in Britain occurred in varying degrees throughout the civilized world. Men became better. This is what Belgium did for the world; and it was a service for which mankind can never sufficiently thank her. The crisis was one towards which the civilized world had been inevitably advancing for many years; and to the historian of the distant future the era of 1914 will still stand out as a great landmark, for a companion to which his eye may even travel down the long perspective of centuries to that time when Christ preached "peace on earth and goodwill towards men"—the idea which, to repeat Mr. Asquith's phrase, "still dominates mankind." That in most spheres of human activity it has seemed little more than an "idea," as far removed from daily practice in individual as in international life, has been due to the stress of the persistent

struggle for existence. The "idea" was in every heart; but the pressure of necessity controlled every brain, and the brain was, almost always, the working partner.

And out of the struggle for existence engineered by the brain arose the armed might of the German Empire, a gigantic organism deliberately constructed in every detail upon theories of hard science. Christ's "idea" had no place in this; although even in German dreams it asserted itself as the final ambition—a world-peace of goodwill and content under the sheltering wings of the Prussian eagle.

Thus the real question at issue was whether or not Christ's teaching should definitely be shelved until Germany, after subduing the world, had time to attend to it. It would have been difficult, and rightly so, to persuade the British nation that so plain an issue was involved in the quarrel between Serbia and Austria, or between Austria and Russia, or Germany and Russia, or even Germany and France. Treaty obligations might have compelled the British Government to declare war against Germany under conditions which did not apparently involve this issue; for treaties are entangling things which sometimes drag a nation in the direction whither it should not go.

Whether we should necessarily have been embroiled in a war between Germany and France would have depended upon circumstances; and if the Kaiser had realized that the British Empire would go headlong into war for the "idea" of which Mr. Asquith spoke at Dublin, his diplomats might have been adroit enough to shift the rupture with France on to ground where the "idea" had no place. But the fact was that the German mind, having itself shelved the "idea"—that the Right must prevail by the will of God—did not conceive that it could still be the mainspring of British policy, nay, more, that it should, as Mr. Asquith said at Dublin, "still dominate mankind." So the German, claiming to be a superman, did not trouble himself to be adroit in diplomacy. "Finesse and scruples," he said—in action, if not in words—"for weaker folk; for me the mailed fist and the big battalions—and the big guns." So the German deliberately embarked upon his course of war by committing a wrong—by outraging the neutrality of a little State which he had pledged his honour to protect. His lofty excuse to God and his own conscience was that he would make it all right afterwards. "I shall defy God now," he said, "in order to win this war easily by a dishonourable trick, and then, when I have won the war and all Europe is at my feet, I shall condescend to make amends to poor little Belgium who will then be my grateful slave." From this mad dream he had a rude awakening at Liège.

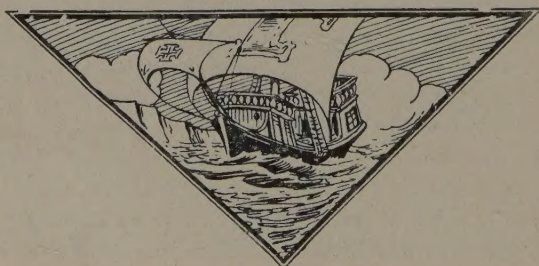
And in describing the German's dream of treachery and conquest as "mad," we are not going beyond the facts of the case. "*Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat*"—"Whom God decides to ruin He first makes mad"—is the ancient Christian form of a still more ancient classic proverb, founded—like our own simple old proverb, "Pride goeth before a fall"—upon the immemorial theme of the oldest Greek tragedies in which Nemesis always waited grimly upon the insolence (*ὕβρις*) of triumphant tyrants.

This was the ailment of the German. He was too swelled with pride in the Teuton "thoroughness" of his own preparations for the conquest of the world in peace and war to be able to give way to the "rights" of little peoples. He would look into the matter after he had finished his conquest. Belgium and Britain—and God—must wait until then. These may not be the exact words which the German Government used, but they convey no exaggeration in fact of the attitude which that Government adopted. It had quite forgotten the idea which still inspires and dominates mankind—the idea that in defending the Right we fight on the side of God.

Thus the German, who deliberately omitted the Right from his scheme of world-conquest, unconsciously did greater service for the Right than any philanthropist could have conceived in his wildest dreams.

"It is my Imperial and Royal intention," said the Kaiser in effect on August 3, 1914, "to give consideration to the wishes of God with regard to Belgium when I shall have executed my Imperial and Royal will with regard to France and the pestilent and contemptible English." As a foreigner his Imperial and Royal Majesty was not to be blamed for failing to observe that, besides the English, there were Scotch, Irish, Welsh, Canadian, Australian, South African, Indian, and many other contingents concerned in the offence of *lesse majesté* which he so much resented. Even those natives in South Africa who are wisely prohibited from carrying arms had petitioned the Government that they might be allowed to "throw a few stones" at the Germans!

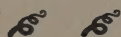
The Kaiser did not dream of the magnificent work which he was doing; how he was welding the Empire upon which the sun never sets into a single active organism for the good of the world and to the glory of God. He was thinking only of Germany as typified in its Supreme War Lord, himself.



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